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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 000571

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE AND ENGAGEMENT ON ZIMBABWE

REF: STATE 44610

Classified By: A/DCM CLAUDIA E. ANYASO FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) After Charge had requested meetings over the past month with the Foreign Minister and UnderSecretary for African Affairs, A/DCM was given an appointment and delivered reftel demarche on Zimbabwe to MFA African Affairs Director Steve A. Owolabi on March 26. Owolabi characterized Nigeria's relationship with Zimbabwe as having been strained since the GOZ's December decision to pull out of the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, he noted that Nigeria's relationship with Zimbabwe historically has been good and the GON hopes to continue to work towards a solution to Zimbabwe's political and economic problems.

[1](#)2. (C) When asked about steps the GON was willing to take on Zimbabwe, Owolabi could not offer specifics and only commented that the GON believed publicizing its efforts on Zimbabwe would only make it more difficult to work with the GOZ and to reach a settlement with Zimbabwe's political opposition. Owolabi was not able to comment on possible steps other African states and institutions might take with regard to Zimbabwe either, nor provide GON recommended benchmarks for gauging progress toward the resolution of the political crisis in Zimbabwe. He asked for a non-paper, and post gave him a slightly updated set from the reftel talking points.

[1](#)3. (U) Embassy followed up with the MFA Permanent Secretary March 31, and will continue with other senior MFA officials in the next week.

ROBERTS